



TOWN OF HOPEDALE

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Finance Committee

September 27, 2021 Meeting Minutes 6:00 pm, via Zoom

Attendees:

Present:

E. Callahan, D. Comastra, C. Hodgens, P. Maloney, C. Strapponi, K. Wilson

Absent:

D. Madigan, D. Piatt

The Finance Committee meeting was opened at 6:02 pm by Chris Hodgens.

Votes:

1. The minutes of September 8, 2021 were presented. All voted in favor with Ken Wilson abstaining due to absence.
2. The minutes of September 13, 2021 were presented. All voted in favor.
3. The Committee considered a request from the Water & Sewer Department for the amount of \$200,000 in anticipation of federal stimulus funds. All voted in favor.

Events:

1. The Committee discussed the use of federal stimulus money in the amount of \$200,00 for purposes of identifying and new sources of water (2 sites considered at this time). Finding water will allow a delay in expending approximately \$3.5M in upgrades. If not successful various stop-gaps will be implemented: further water use restrictions, exploration of a contract with the Town of Milford to purchase water and/or looking to the Parklands for sources.
2. The Committee reviewed the significant expense/capital item list. The Town's contribution to purchase the SCBA equipment has been modified to a lower amount and the expected cost for a van has been updated.
3. Diana Schindler reviewed the Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) rates with the committee. The Treasurer/Collector is receiving quotes of .4 - .6% plus application fees vs. 5% (and above) from initial quotes through dealerships/manufacturers.
4. The difficulties of filling the Library Director position were reviewed. There are currently many openings in nearby communities with starting pay in the low \$70k's.

5. The Committee did an initial review of warrant articles for the upcoming Special Town Meeting in October. The Committee will officially give favorable/not favorable recommendations at a future meeting, but offered feedback during this meeting:
 - a. The grouping of Article 3 was discussed at length. The proposal for adjustment was to group the Health Office and Library Director items together and the adjustment for the Treasurer/Collector should be its own item.
 - b. Article 4 included the significant expense/capital items: detail should be added for “miscellaneous Fire Department equipment” (what types of items) and “tree preservation” (where/why).

**Ken Wilson exited the meeting at 7:00pm for a prior commitment.*

 - c. The Committee suggested any contract increases/salary adjustments be funded from “raise and appropriate” articles vs. use of stabilization. Diana Schindler voiced concern over the amounts and staying within the 2.5% increase in the tax base.
6. Carole Mullen inquired about the location of the proposed water tower at 187 Freedom Street referenced in the warrant articles as it did not specify an exact location. Diana Schindler indicated it will be located in a cul-de-sac never completed in the Pinecrest neighborhood, but she did not have the details. Carole will discuss with Tim Watson, Water & Sewer Department Head separately.
7. The item to discuss trash and recycling will be raised in a future meeting.
8. Special Town Meeting
October 16 at 11:00 am

The Finance Committee will meet on October 4, 2021 at 6:00 pm.

The Chair called the meeting to Adjournment at 7:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth S. Callahan

Recording Secretary
Hopedale Finance Committee